

## **Historic, Archive Document**

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1991

**THROUGH**



## THE ROCKIES TOUR

MILEAGE: 46 miles  
TIME: 2 to 4 hours



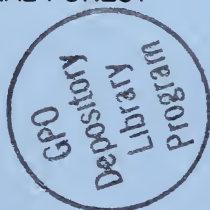
This tour is designed for one of those days when a day in the car sounds pretty good. It's a long tour, but those willing to spend the time can revel in some beautiful scenery as well as see some interesting wildlife.

This is an excellent tour for viewing elk and deer because of the amount of forage in the area. Large amounts of forage are due to logging that opened up the area for young saplings and grass.



Del Norte Ranger District  
RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST

10 MAR 1992





## BOBCATS & MOUNTAIN LIONS

Both bobcats and mountain lions can be found in forested areas but prefer rocky outcrops. The mountain lion is also known by cougar, puma, and panther.

Bobcats are much more adaptable than mountain lions because of the bobcats variable diet. The mountain lion eats mainly deer, while the bobcat eats hares, rabbits, and pikas with occasional rodents and birds.

Sighting one of these creatures is usually rare during the day.



## MARMOTS

Marmots are frequently seen around logged areas because they spend much of their time around wood or rock piles. A member of the squirrel family, they have a brown color with a yellow belly and a sharp, shrill whistle that gives their location away.

# CRITTERS

*Illustrations courtesy of the Colorado Division of Wildlife*

## BIRDS

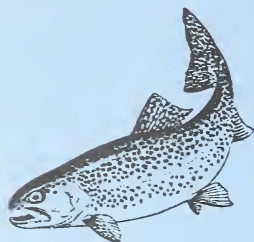
This tour is a fantastic birding endeavor. During the first stretch of the tour, pinyon and juniper trees and meadows support birds such as, yellow warblers, western meadowlarks, dusky and western flycatchers, common nighthawks, and great horned owls. As the tour proceeds, the habitat switches to Douglas fir and ponderosa pine supporting species such as, orange-crowned warblers, western tanagers, red-naped and Williamson's sapsuckers, Clark's nutcrackers, Steller's jays, chickadees, and pygmy owls. In the higher country, spruce-fir vegetation types support ruby-crowned kinglets, gray jays, yellow-rumped warblers, red crossbills, flycatchers, boreal owls, and saw-whet and long-eared owls are possible sightings. Finally, around Beaver Reservoir, spotted sandpiper, mergansers, mallards and other waterfowl are prevalent.



## FISH & FISHING

To complete the tour, continue to follow Rd. 360. If you wish to stop to do a little fishing, however, Rd. 332 will lead you to Poage Lake. Poage Lake is about 1/4 mile hike from the road but is good fishing and quite scenic. The fish that are caught are said to be good eating and healthy-looking.

In addition to Poage Lake, Beaver Reservoir is known for good fishing. Beaver Reservoir is on the last part of the loop before you drop down into South Fork. Salmon and several species of trout are caught in the reservoir.



## PINE MARTEN

These rarely-seen animals have long thin dark bodies with little pointed ears and are often found in sections of dense timber near open areas. Martens are solitary animals except during the breeding season, at which time they require snags, hollow logs, or burrows under trees and large rocks for suitable dens.



## ELK

Elk are commonly seen feeding on grasses in past clear-cut areas. Grasses make up about 75 percent of the summer diet of elk, making this area prime summer habitat.

Cow elk are most common, but an occasional bull can be seen. Calves, born in late May to early June, will hopefully be visible with the cows during the summer months.



## MULE DEER

Mule Deer can also be found throughout the area. Their characteristic basket-shaped antlers and hopping-type movement aid in identifying the animals.

# THE ROUTE

The tour begins on Pinos Creek Road, which is on the West end of Del Norte, Co. on the South side of Hwy. 160. The tour ends in the town of South Fork, Co.

The entire tour comprises 3 roads, forest roads #330, 332, and 360. There are numerous logging roads in the area, but the main road is the best maintained and easy to distinguish from the others. Pinos Creek Rd. is #330. About 18 miles up Rd. 330, you will come to an area called the "chicken foot" because of its 3-toed appearance. There are three roads leading off into different directions from nearly the same point. The tour follows Rd. 332, the road to the right of the others called the Crystal Lakes Road. Follow this road until you hit the fork that either goes to Poage Lake or to Beaver Creek Reservoir, Rd. 360. Turn right on Rd. 360 toward the reservoir. This road will lead you all the way down into the town of South Fork and back onto Hwy. 160.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As you drive through the middle of the loop, you will notice extensive logging operations that occurred in the area. Those operations took place from 1981 to 1984 in order to stop an infestation of the spruce beetle. Spruce beetles get under the bark and destroy the cambium layer of the tree, killing it within a few years.

A severe wind storm in 1978 knocked over many trees and created an ideal situation for a beetle infestation. Spruce beetles, already present in the area in small numbers, dramatically spread.

The area was logged heavily to halt the spread of the beetles and to prevent extensive aesthetic and economic losses had the area been left unmanaged. It happened that beetle numbers did decline, but it is not known whether it was from the logging or from a natural phenomenon, such as a parasite killing off the beetles. The area is now being left to revegetate and return to its original condition.



**RIDE THE ROCKIES TOUR**

**NORTH**



